

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed January 1, 2004 has been received and the Examiner's comments carefully reviewed. Formal drawings have been filed herewith. No new subject matter has been added. Claims 1-31 are pending in this application. Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-6, 10-14, 18-21, and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Sinclair III et al. (U.S. 20020118820 A1) in view of Bolinger et al. (U.S. 5,892,663). Claims 7-9, 15-17, and 22-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Sinclair III et al. and Bolinger et al. and in further view of Miniet (U.S. 4,567,543). Claims 26-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Bolinger et al. in view of Miniet. These rejections are traversed.

The outstanding Office Action suggests that though Sinclair III et al. does not teach an insulator connected to the circuit board so as to cover the exposed ends of the termination post, it would have been obvious to apply the dielectric insulator of Bolinger et al. to cover the exposed ends of the termination post to Sinclair III et al. See Office Action at pages 3 and 4. This position is based on the erroneous premise that Sinclair III et al. includes termination posts having exposed ends.

Claims 1-6, 10-14, 18-21, and 25 all recite a telecommunications device that includes, among other things, a circuit board with connectors thereon that include contacts electrically connected to *termination posts that extend through the circuit board such that the ends of the termination posts are exposed*. Sinclair III et al. fails to disclose or suggest such structure.

In Sinclair III et al., the disclosed telecommunication device includes a connector card 14 that has a backside having connectors 52 extending therefrom. See FIG. 3A and paragraph 0043. The connectors 52 are electrically connected to header strips 62 disposed on the front side of the connector card 14. See paragraph 0046. Each header strip 62 includes metal alignment pins 63 that include an initially exposed portion constructed to mate with a socket strip 66 that are disposed on the back side of the edge card 16. See FIGS. 3A, 4A, 7 and paragraphs 0046 and 0058. Once the telecommunication device is assembled, the socket strip 66 mates with and

encloses the ends of the metal alignment pins 63. Accordingly, since, among other things, Sinclair III et al. fails to disclose or suggest a telecommunication device having exposed terminal posts, there exists no motivation to combine the dielectric insulator of Bolinger et al. with Sinclair III et al. Accordingly, the above-listed rejected claims are not obvious over the cited references.

Claims 26-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Bolinger et al. in view of Miniet. Claim 26 recites an insulator for covering exposed termination posts of a telecommunications device that includes, among other things, an elongated dielectric strip including a mid portion, the mid portion defining a recess for receiving the exposed termination posts that has a length that extends along a majority of a total length of the dielectric strip. Both Bolinger et al. and Miniet fail to disclose such structure.

In particular, Bolinger et al. disclose an insulator 10 having two solid portions 12 and 14 flanking an open mid portion 16. The solid portions 12, 14 cover/ insulate the major surfaces of the card 46 and the open mid portion 16 fold over a periphery edge while allowing access to devices 54, 58 disposed on the periphery edge of the card 46. In addition, the mid portion is disposed across rather than along the length of the insulator. See Bolinger et al. at Figure 3 and at column 2, lines 45-53. Accordingly, Bolinger et al. fail to disclose or suggest a recessed mid portion for receiving exposed terminal posts. In fact, since Bolinger et al. teach an open mid portion that traverse the insulator, the reference actually teaches away from a recess mid portion that has a length that extends along the length of the dielectric strip.


Miniet also fails to disclose or suggest an insulator according to claim 26. In Miniet the recess 180 does not have a length that extends along a majority of a total length of the dielectric strip. Rather the recess 180 is shown as a rectangular aperture in the insulator 110. See Miniet Figure 1 and at column 4, lines 60-68. Moreover, the aperture 180 of Miniet is not constructed to insulate terminal posts. Rather, the aperture 180 is constructed to accommodate different physical components 120, e.g., a crystal oscillator. See Miniet at column 5, line 63 - column, 6 line 2. Since neither Miniet nor Bolinger et al. disclose or suggest the features recited in claim 26, claim 26 is not obvious over the two references. Claims 27-31 depend on and further limit claim 26, therefore, for at least the same reasons, they are also not anticipated by claim 26.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 612-336-4617.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300

Date: April 30, 2004


David G. Schmaltz
Reg. No. 39,828
DGS/JEP:sl

23552

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE